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Jacques Maritain

● James Kritzeck

THE human mind is presented with few irreducible alternatives with which to account for reality. Classically, and in fact as long as reason was regarded as an adequate tool for knowing (and for knowing, among other things, other ways of knowing), the Western world generally preferred some form of the mind-matter dualism. Semitic religion, to be sure, when it came to take up these modes of expression, discovered that it could subscribe to no other basic philosophy. Profiting by the chemistry of its own heresies, as well as by the discomfort which Islam had experienced in attempting to bring Aristotelian dualism into harmony with Koranic dualism, mediæval Christianity sought a summation of theology in which no part of reality would be overlooked. Precisely such a summation is believed by many, including myself, to have been supplied by St. Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century. But just as the theological content of this particular summation, the systematized expression of one infinitely rich, indeed inexhaustible, Divine Revelation, was meant to germinate further speculation, so was its philosophical content. I know of no mind that has examined the philosophical content of the Thomistic synthesis with greater precision, interpreted it with greater probity, advanced its growth with greater genius, than has the mind of Jacques Maritain.

The work of Maritain would have a significance, therefore, quite apart from whether the *Summa Theologiæ* were a treasure in a few abbey libraries or a book-of-the-month. There is a timelessness about his work simply because it bears the imprint of the whole history of thought. To attack or defend it seriously is to attack or defend any of many categories: the classical province of philosophy itself; its tool, reason; the basic philosophical position called dualism; the statement of that position by Aquinas; its translation and extension (or some part of it) by Maritain. As it happens, none of these categories stands immune of attack in our times. Maritain understands this, since it is part of his view that man has his freedom.

What Maritain does about it, however, is to bear constant witness to the truth. He has said and written often enough that it is not his business, nor that of any human being, to secure the triumph of truth, but only to be its witness. I myself do not profess to know what there is in men that makes them desire such living witnesses to truth; but they do desire them, fervently and insatiably, for all the realms truth touches, from common sense to mystical theology. And Maritain is a witness in no fewer realms: as a philosopher, he witnesses to the corpus of truth (to which he himself has added) attainable by unaided human reason; as a Catholic Christian, he witnesses to the corpus of truth which is given only

through faith and grace, which surpasses and enlivens the participating truths, and which is the *Corpus vere natum ex Maria Virgine.*

I hope I will not be misunderstood if I say that I regard Maritain's testimony as a philosopher to constitute the more amazing and urgent aspect of his life of witnessing. The Church is divinely assured, after all, that she will never lack witnesses; poor philosophy enjoys no such assurance. Moreover, in an intellectual climate like the one in which so large a part of the modern world operates, that very functioning of reason which is capable of preparing the human mind for receiving supra-rational truth has been perversely inverted nearly to suicide. It was a great and laudable thing for Pope Leo XIII, the Dominican Order, and Louvain University to have lifted Thomism out of the book-stacks; but it was an even greater and more laudable thing, in my opinion, for Maritain to have dive-bombed it into the very center of the world's intellectual and cultural crisis. Those whose feathers are already ruffled might be partially preened if I recalled for them an evening when I was among a small group which included Albert Einstein, Julian Huxley, and J. Robert Oppenheimer, and heard the sole basis of agreement among the group specifically defined as Maritain's address before the Second International Conference of UNESCO at Mexico City in 1947.

In his brilliant preface to *The Angelic Doctor,* Maritain set forth once and for all the claim of Thomism to the philosophical peerage. "There is a Thomist philosophy," he wrote; "there is no neo-Thomist philosophy. We make no claim to include anything of the past in the present, but to maintain in the present the 'actuality' of the eternal . . . Thomism claims to make use of reason to distinguish truth from falsehood; it does not want to destroy but to purify modern speculation and to integrate all the truth that has been discovered since the time of St. Thomas. It is an essentially synthetic and assimilative philosophy, the only philosophy which, as a matter of fact, attempts throughout the ages and the continents a work of continuity and universality. . . . I assert that truth does not pass, does not flow away with history; that the spirit does not disintegrate, that there are stabilities not of inertia but of spirituality and life; intemporal values; eternal acquisitions; that time is in the eternal like a gold piece in the clutch of the hand; and that the mind is above time."

It would be the worst kind of wanton foolishness on my part to attempt a summary of Maritain's work as a philosopher. There are already three fat *Festschriften* and two biographies which barely begin the task. Moreover, it is a complete mystery to me why any such thing should be attempted while the philosopher is enjoying the most prolific part of his career. I would say that I regard *The Degrees of Knowledge,* as does Maritain, as his most important book so far, with *A Preface to Metaphysics, True Humanism, Education at the Crossroads, Existence and the Existent,* and *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* not very far behind. Because there is no branch of philosophy which his mind has not explored, it is obvious

that those with different passions will prefer different parts of his work and take different stands as to their relative importance. For my part, I confess I find him most exciting when he is battering at the furthermost reaches of reason; his statement of the argument for the immortality of the soul in *Man's Destiny in Eternity* and *The Range of Reason*, his "sixth way" of demonstrating God's existence in *Approaches to God*, and a set of still unpublished Princeton lectures on the primary moral notions are, for my money, the words of his most clearly destined to immortality.

But there is also, and especially, Maritain the man. I disagree (in common with everyone who knows Maritain) with my friend Thomas Merton's remark that "it is enough" to read his books or perhaps to shake his hand. I go on record, in fact, in saying quite the opposite, that there is absolutely no substitute for his teaching and his friendship. Monsignor de Menasce agrees with me most redoubtably in a recent enchanting article in *The Commonweal*. No, to have missed knowing Maritain would mean, for me, to have missed knowing the most joyful, gentle, and entirely Christ-like man ever to enter my life. Any sympathetic reader will understand and forgive me for not making this article a mémoir; such precious things one keeps under lock and key.

But there is an observation about Maritain the man that I do want to make. I once saw a note in the handwriting of Pope Pius XII thanking Maritain for bringing his speculative philosophy into the French Embassy to the Holy See. I think similar thanks are due him for bringing it to the shores of the United States of America. Maurice Lavanoux and Harry Lorin Binsse still glow when they describe Maritain's first visit to New York; they loved him, of course, as others were to love him in Chicago, South Bend, New Haven, Princeton, and throughout the country. But he also, let it not be forgotten, loved them and this country, less for the hospitality it gave him and Raissa and Vera during desperate times than for the reserves for philosophy and contemplation which he discerned within it and burned to evoke and enlist for Thomism and truth. At a time when this country's sudden and somewhat unprepared leadership in world affairs is widely misunderstood and resented in Europe, and when Catholic Americans are similarly misunderstood and berated at home, the presence of one in whom all these elements are present, fruitful, and at peace, seems particularly providential. An outrageous friend of mine once put it quite nicely when he said that some day a truly American altar will possess two reliquaries, one containing a piece of charred wood that burned the Jesuit Martyrs, the other a piece of chalk used by Jacques Maritain in teaching philosophy at Princeton.

Two Birds with One Stone

• Judith Groch

POOR soul! Never, never in a million years would Miss Ripple have guessed that she was the butt of the department's laughter. Not even if you had told her to her face. She had trained herself too well by now, and like a bird, she pecked at life in small, carefully selected samples, interpreting the material for her needs. If she was threatened she moved, not running, but simply fluttering to another branch where it was safer. And she was really quite safe in Dr. Ponti's laboratory, because it was her nest.

And so you might have giggled out loud at her and she would have shrugged her shoulders and returned to her typing, convinced that you were talking about someone else. If she thought about it at all in the evening after work, she would have been too busy with Dr. Ponti's 3-methyl glucose paper which she had taken home to retype so that it would be ready for him the next day—a surprise which he had grown to expect. Later she would drink her cup of tea, staring into its mysterious pools, conjuring the pleasure on Dr. Ponti's face the next day. Then she would stretch her thin body out on the cold, lonely sheets, unaware that there were better ways to warm a bed than with an electric blanket. Shivering slightly she would draw her icy feet beneath her, press the blanket switch to "medium," and fall asleep to dream of the sparkle in Dr. Ponti's eyes when he found the paper ready for him the next day.

"Old Violet's been getting queerer and queerer for the past twenty years," they would say in the office. "One of these days she'll lose her marbles altogether. Poor old soul."

Miss Ripple had come to the Vinson Chemical Laboratories in the sad months after her father's death twenty years earlier. Mr. Ripple had been an invalid for many years and some people said that if it hadn't been for that sweet daughter of his the old boy wouldn't have lasted that long. She was a good girl, they said, and a darn sight better than that no good mother of hers. Even now if you looked at Miss Ripple's face, and if you saw beyond the tired skin which was nothing more than a blotter for powder and lipstick, and perhaps if you shut one eye, squinting back into the past, you could see that the fair skin and blonde hair must once have belonged to a pretty woman. Not even an echo was left now, unless you squinted hard. It was as if the lovely features had had a choice: to grow more lovely, or to turn sour. They had chosen the latter course, shriveling and drying so that at the age of forty-three all that Miss Ripple had left was her work as a secretary to a very important experimental chemist.

It was really too soon for Miss Ripple to wither and turn queer, but this process, which had caught

her up as a young girl and carried on into middle age, had inched forward so quietly that she never realized what had happened until the mold was set and the pattern formed. She never questioned the daily routine of her life and she gloried in the chance to serve Dr. Ponti. Her services to him, making his appointments, typing his manuscripts, protecting him from unwanted visitors, and serving him his coffee, filled the large spaces as well as the cracks and crannies of her life, which might otherwise have remained empty and painful. She filled herself with Dr. Ponti, not with his love, of course (that was for others), but with his details, fondling them as a dog nurses its bone.

Was it enough for her? Well, almost. There were times at night when the electric blanket was not up to the task of warming Miss Ripple, and she would lie shivering in bed with the sad feeling that there were things which had gone wrong. At five o'clock each afternoon when everybody was hurrying home to bright lights and noisy families, Miss Ripple was never heard to say, "Oh dear, I must hurry home. It's late." You could not call "home" a one-room apartment where only the clocks cared whether you returned to wind them. But it made little difference because Miss Ripple's real home was at the office.

Each morning when she arrived she would remove the ridiculous hat she always wore because, she said, it kept her hair in place and she just couldn't stand to have her hair flying all over the lot, it got so kinky after a permanent you know, and so hard to handle, even with that new shampoo she was using—and then she would go into Dr. Ponti's office and sort his mail. You never saw so much mail: requests to speak about his new di-peptide experiments at the Chemical Society meeting in Washington, requests for reprints of his papers, requests for advice, business letters, and personal letters accidentally sent to the office. All these she opened, setting them in neat piles on his desk. Then she would arrange fresh flowers in the vase on her desk, carefully trimming their stems, encouraging them and talking to them like beloved friends.

Oh how she loved flowers! They brought a bit of color into her office, and she just had to have color; it was so colorless without it. "Color is so important, you know," she would tell the chemists who walked through her office in their white lab coats. And then she would say she didn't have a thing to wear. At this moment a young technician would enter the office and Miss Ripple would say, "Mary, you can wear a lab coat and then it doesn't make any difference what you wear underneath. It's not the same for me, you see. I'm in the front office and I meet all sorts of people, and of course, I have to look presentable. This old thing I'm wearing . . . " and she would run her hands over the blue gabardine suit she always wore, except when she wore the black or the green one which were the same, only different in color, "why it shines so! But I never have a thing to wear, you know. It's my figure. It's so difficult to fit." By this time the ensnared technician

would say that it was quality which mattered, not quantity, and return to her laboratory shaking her head, wondering what poor Miss Ripple would be like in ten years.

Then Miss Ripple would sit at her desk, smiling to herself while preparing Important Things for the doctor. And woe unto you if you spoke critically of Dr. Ponti. As his guard dog, she would not stand for it, and you would be given an icy look and labeled a "not-nice" person. Dr. Ponti was God. Oh, not the kind Miss Ripple worshipped in church every Sunday morning. He was another matter. He was everybody's God. But Dr. Ponti was Miss Ripple's God, and she was Dr. Ponti's knight errant, if you can picture a lady knight errant in wobbly spike heels, and a drab suit, with frizzled blonde hair on her crest and a mouth so thin it looked as if the lips had been drawn on the face with a single line of the pencil. Nothing Dr. Ponti did could be wrong, not even when he asked Miss Ripple if she wouldn't please retype his forty-page paper because he had forgotten to tell her that he would need four carbons instead of the usual three. "Yes sir," she would say. "And could you please tell me what to do about the Hallwright letter? The company is waiting for an answer."

"I'm too busy now," the doctor would say and retire to his laboratory to pare his nails. It was not everybody who could get along with the "old boy," and "let me tell you," Miss Ripple would say, "there are plenty of people around here who are scared of him."

Part of the difficulty with Dr. Ponti was the cloud in which he always traveled. It preceded and trailed him, and there were only a few people who knew how to penetrate it. Miss Ripple was proud that she had been given the key, although you might say it was a backdoor key. When Thomas L. Ponti, M.D., Ph.D., came gliding down the hall, his white hair floating behind him, his deep-set eyes gazing intently at his feet and his hands clutched behind him, you knew you could not talk to him unless you first got his head up from his feet where it had followed his eyes, and then you would have to break through his cloud. All the while you could not help thinking how much he resembled a mad scientist as portrayed in the movies, and at a time like this you had no way of knowing that although his great machine of a brain might be working with carbon atoms, it was more probably trying to decide whether he should take the day off when his daughter Ellen's first baby was born.

And you certainly could not know that later he would sit in his office carefully trimming his finger nails with a cork borer while trying to come to a decision. Only Miss Ripple knew what he did in the sanctity of his office. It was like having intimate marital secrets and she always entered the sanctum with proper reverence.

The walls of the doctor's office were lined with photographs and citations, all of which Miss Ripple knew by heart. First came the family pictures, and that angelic one of Ellen on her wedding day. Soon

there would be grandchildren and she fluttered happily in anticipation of the new additions to the collection. The professional pictures hung on the north wall. There was a photograph of the army group the doctor had directed during the war with a "Tom, thought you'd like this, Ed (the general)," as well as the many commendations for his work, including the one from the President of the United States. This was Miss Ripple's favorite and she treasured it as if it had been conferred on herself, dusting it carefully, making certain that it hung straight when she was finished. There was nothing she disliked so much as crooked pictures on the wall she often told the laboratory workers, nothing, but nothing upset her so much, except perhaps that pepper they put into certain kinds of food, but she tried to avoid eating that, even if people thought her impolite, but crooked pictures on the wall . . . ! That she couldn't stand.

Miss Ripple worshipped Dr. Ponti and would have done anything for Mrs. Ponti, a loyalty she demonstrated whenever Mrs. Ponti gave a large dinner party, chasing all around town on her lunch hour to find the right size candlesticks for Mrs. Ponti's overgrown candelabrum, helping with the canapes, and then finally when the guests arrived, taking their coats while Mrs. Ponti said a great many charming things which Miss Ripple wished she had thought of, only she said she had never developed the gift of small talk.

Her greatest joy, however, was going to the library for Dr. Ponti. The scientist would come into her office, stare up at the ceiling for a while, and then down at the floor, like a dog who is trying to make up its mind about something, and then, as if the idea had just come to him he would say, "Errr, Miss Ripple" (after twenty years he still called her Miss Ripple, although he called Dora Anderson, the new bio-chemist, Dora, after one week), "do you think you could go to the library for me sometime today and bring back the books I've written down here?"

"Why certainly, Dr. Ponti. I'll go just as soon as I've finished the Treadwell letter."

"Thank you very much, Miss Ripple," he would say as if the entire interview had been extremely painful, and then fixing his eyes on his shoes he would turn around once or twice and depart.

Miss Ripple loved going to the library and later at night in her narrow bed she would remember how, when she had showed them the little card which permitted her to borrow books for Dr. Ponti, they had said, "Oh, if it's for Dr. Ponti, then certainly you may take it out. It's a rare book, you know, and it doesn't go out ordinarily, but under these circumstances, of course. We'll have it for you in a few moments," and a special clerk would be dispatched to bring the book for Miss Ripple so that she wouldn't have to wait the way ordinary people did. It was at times like these that all kinds of wonderful little feelings would run up and down Miss Ripple, and sometimes she forgot that they were not really getting the

book for Violet Ripple, but for Dr. Thomas Ponti. Hurrying back to the office, clutching her pocketbook tightly, she would peer at her reflection as it scurried along in the store windows and worry that her hair looked a fright under her velure hat which was getting rather shabby.

"Thank you so much, Miss Ripple," Dr. Ponti might say, if he was in an on-this-earth mood. It was hit or miss whether he said it or not, but if by accident he thanked his secretary, he had no idea of the happiness he brought to the poor woman who made her life in his shadow. But by just such unconscious kindness, as one pats a dog, Miss Ripple's heart was gladdened and fed with the food for its devotion.

Dr. Ponti's impenetrable cloud may have rendered him untouchable to his colleagues, but it did not frighten the automobile which plowed into him at the corner of Sixty-eighth and Fifth. As usual, he was watching his toes, juggling carbon atoms in his head and he did not see the bright red car as he stepped from the curb. Then it was too late and he crumpled to the ground like a marionette whose strings have been dropped. The ambulance brought him to the hospital and the identification card in his wallet gave the laboratory phone number.

Miss Ripple answered the phone and when they told her that Dr. Ponti had been critically injured in an automobile accident and that she'd better notify his wife and get her down to the hospital pretty quickly, Miss Ripple gave a strangled shriek and slumped in her feathers like a wounded bird. She began to tremble and her head wanted to burst, but otherwise all she could feel was stunning numbness. While still paralyzed with shock she spread the news of Dr. Ponti's accident and called Mrs. Ponti to tell her about what had happened, and that there was no time to lose. Then she snatched her purse, forgetting the foolish hat for the first time in her life, and took a taxi uptown to the hospital to see if she could help.

She met Mrs. Ponti in the lobby and they exchanged hurried looks, but no more, because the doctor arrived and inquired which one was the wife and escorted Mrs. Ponti into the jaws of the hospital, leaving Miss Ripple standing alone.

She approached the nurse who sat behind the information desk.

"I wonder if you could give me any information about Dr. Thomas Ponti? He was injured in an automobile accident this afternoon and they brought . . . "

"You're not his wife, are you?" said the young woman sternly.

"Oh, no," replied Miss Ripple clutching her pocketbook with both hands. "You see, I'm Dr. Ponti's secretary. I've been for the past twenty years, and I wondered if there was anything I could do to help. And," she hesitated, "could you just tell me how he is?"

"There is really nothing you can do to help. The doctor is in good hands and no strangers are allowed," the nurse replied correctly.

"Oh?" said Miss Ripple. "No

strangers! I'm not quite, you know, a stranger. I work for the doctor."

Could she really be a stranger? She who made the doctor's dentist appointments, who typed his personal mail, and who knew he liked his coffee half-and-half, with one sugar.

"I'm sorry, Miss. There are no visitors allowed," said the nurse without looking up from the cards she was sorting. "He was quite seriously hurt, you know."

"I know," said Miss Ripple apologetically. "I'm sorry to have bothered you, only the doctor always liked me to help, if I could, you know, he did like it, and once he said he didn't know what he'd do without me. You understand, don't you? My dear father used to say the same thing before he died. Pardon me for troubling you, but you will call me as soon as you hear anything, or if there is anything I can do, won't you." And Miss Ripple removed herself to a chair in the waiting room.

"Wow!" said the nurse to herself, shrugging her shoulders.

For hours Miss Ripple waited, watching people as they came and went: crisp white nurses gliding through silent doors, doctors with stethescopes in their pockets, and even visitors who clicked across the hard floors and finally disappeared into the bowels of the monstrous hospital which had swallowed her Dr. Ponti. Miss Ripple sat forever in the ugly, leather chair waiting for news.

People passing through the room noticed the worn, old chair. But where was Miss Ripple? Had she shrunk and faded so much they could not see her?

Oh there she is. There . . . in the chair. It's Miss Ripple, isn't it? Isn't that funny? We nearly lost her. So what? What's she doing there? Oh, I see. She's thrown her coat over her shoulders. Now it's even harder to see her in that shabby, brown coat.

It had grown chilly, but the coat did not help Miss Ripple because the blood had begun to ice in her veins. Even the tears which kept rising to her eyes finally settled down inside of her and froze so that she returned the handkerchief she had been holding to its place in her pocketbook. Lonely, and with a choking heart she sat there holding tightly to her pocketbook because it was all that she had left to hold.

She even dozed off for a few moments and she dreamed she was a little girl again, dressed in a warm, red flannel robe which zipped in the front, and her father (it didn't look like her father, but she knew it was) was asking her to close the window because there was a chill and he'd catch his death of cold, but just then a voice at her side said:

"Miss," it was the nurse speaking. "Don't tell me you're still here. Didn't they tell you? Dr. Ponti died several hours ago."

"Dr. Ponti died . . . ?" Miss Ripple looked up at the nurse. "Died . . . ?"

Really Miss Ripple, you are very small and gray and brown. No wonder we didn't see you there in the chair.

"Yes, the doctor died of injuries received in the accident this after-

noon. The funeral," the nurse said, "will be on Friday."

Miss Ripple was magnificent at the funeral and everybody said she was worth her weight in gold, and they didn't know what the poor bereaved family would have done without the secretary's calm efficiency. First, she handled all the funeral arrangements, and after the terrible business at the cemetery she went to the Ponti home and hung up the coats of the many visitors who came to pay condolence calls, and arranged the beautiful flowers in vases and set them around the house.

"How marvelous," they said, "to have Miss Ripple."

For two weeks she stayed at the Ponti home, and then when she had helped the last visitor into his coat, and when finally the flowers wilted and died, unable longer to respond to her faithful trimming and to the aspirins she put in their water to preserve them, Miss Ripple took her own coat and went home.

Home! It was a bitter, dark night outside and she shivered with fright and cold as she scurried down the streets with the wind at her heels. Once inside where neither wind nor stranger could follow she slowed down and wearily climbed the two flights to her room. She turned the key in the latch and entered the silence which waited for her like a deep shroud. The room and its sparse furniture greeted her with an unfriendly shrug, as if to say, why have you bothered coming here, and hastily she flicked the light switch flooding the room with cruel light which made her blink rapidly.

She put her coat in the closet and sat down on the bed. There was so much to do before the next morning and she knew she should tidy up and dust a bit before going to sleep, put the note out for the milk and make her lunch for tomorrow, but instead, she sat on the bed staring into the long, frightening hours which emptied before her.

"Seven - fifteen, four - thirty, and eleven o'clock." Why the clocks had stopped! The three clocks (she always kept three clocks so that she would be certain of the correct time) had unwound and come to a halt at three ridiculous angles in time. Then rise up, Miss Ripple, and wind your clocks. You have neglected them and now they are hurt.

She started across the room, hesitated, and then returned to the bed and sat down with a sigh. There was no hurry, you know. Really no hurry whatsoever. It was foolish to wind the clocks now that there was so much time. Hours and years of nothing but time. And she held her poor head in her hands to steady the trembling.

The next day when she went to the office to attend to some unfinished business, nobody, not a single soul made fun of Miss Ripple, and nobody laughed at her sad little figure. An old maid turned slightly eccentric may be amusing at times, but there is nothing funny about the smell of death.

Management and the Liberal Arts

• Brother Cormac Philip, F.S.C.

"BRING back the Liberal Arts" was the nostalgic title of a 1943 *Atlantic Monthly* article by the late classicist, Professor E. K. Rand of Harvard. Written though it was in the dark war days, the plea was a confident one: "Liberal education, though retiring discreetly for the moment, is expected to return with a new vigor, arm in arm with Victory." From the vantage point of twelve years later, the confidence appears ill-founded. Victory came back unaccompanied. The evidence that the liberal arts have not made a post-war comeback is amply supplied in a *Harper's* article of July 1954 by A. Whitney Griswold, president of Yale. "What We Don't Know Will Kill Us" was the terse title President Griswold gave his piece. His point was that the liberal arts were being killed in our fair land, and that it was high time we woke up to the fact of that calamity. The liberal arts have not been brought back. What flowers now in our academic gardens is a pallid substitute called "General Education."

Wherever the fault may lie for this sad state of higher education affairs, it should not go unnoticed that at least one valiant segment of the academic world has been unstintedly striving to make Professor Rand's plea effective. The College English Association since June, 1952, has sponsored four institutes on the subject "Industry and the Liberal Arts." The fifth institute, with the help of General Electric, will be held at Union College, April 5-7. Though the theme of these institutes restricts the contextual area of discussion about the liberal arts, the important fact is that they are being discussed, and in a manner relevant to the needs of our industrial society. Specifically, the CEA has been concerned with two complementary purposes: one, how to provide for the business community future captains of industry alert to all management's responsibilities; two, how to communicate this laudable purpose to the industrialists, get their views in return, and, in the resulting happy liaison between higher education and business, effect the common good. The CEA knows that only through a liberal education can these captains of industry be provided, and likewise, though in no spirit of arrogance, is convinced that what business doesn't know about the liberal arts will eventually kill the business community, and that what is good for industry and the liberal arts is indubitably good for the country.

It may be objected, as it has been by some educators, that the CEA's purpose denigrates the liberal arts to the status of the merely useful, and that the liberal arts cannot be discussed in terms of utility. What the CEA

institutes primarily aim to do, however, is to show that the liberal arts are not merely liberal, in the sense, that is, of being merely ends in themselves. Cardinal Newman described liberal knowledge as "that which stands on its own pretensions, which is independent of sequel, expects no complement, refuses to be *informed* (as it is called) by any end, or absorbed into any art, in order duly to present itself to our contemplation." Yet Newman entitles Discourse VII of his *Idea of a University*, "Knowledge Viewed in Relation to Professional Skill," and in two relevant passages (relevant to the CEA's aim, that is) has this to say: "Let us take 'useful' to mean, not what is simply good, but what *tends* to good, or is the *instrument* of good; and in this sense also, I will show you how a liberal education is truly and fully as useful, though it be not a professional education. 'Good' indeed means one thing, and 'useful' means another; but I lay it down as a principle, which will save us a great deal of anxiety, that, though the useful is not always good, the good is always useful." (Italics Newman's.)

In the second passage Newman reiterates the point more emphatically:

> " . . . The man who has learned to think and to reason and to compare and to discriminate and to analyze, who has refined his taste, and formed his judgment, and sharpened his mental vision, will not indeed at once be a lawyer, or a pleader, or an orator, or a statesman, or a physician, or a good landlord, or a man of business, or a soldier, or an engineer, or a chemist, or a geologist, or an antiquarian, but he will be placed in that state of intellect in which he can take up any one of the sciences or callings I have referred to, or any other for which he has a taste or special talent, with an ease, a grace, a versatility, and a success, to which another is a stranger. In this sense, then, and as yet I have said but a very few words on a large subject, mental culture is emphatically *useful*." (Again the italics are Newman's.)

In his latest book, *The Practice of Management*, Peter Drucker refers to "the exclusive hiring" in the business world "of college graduates for management positions" as a practice likely to "breed hostile public opinion and public policies." The CEA, of course, does not advocate any such exclusive hiring. It does, however, recognize that the best aspirants for future executive positions are likely to come from college, particularly if the curriculum followed by the aspirant has been such as to produce in him that habit of mind whose attributes are, in Newman's words, "freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation, and wisdom," which Newman elsewhere refers to as "the philosophical habit of mind." I submit that the philosophical habit of mind is not a typical characteristic of foremen, nor is the foreman likely to acquire the philosophical habit as he goes up the managerial ladder and is given greater and greater responsibility. The philosophical habit of mind isn't acquired so haphazardly or casually; it is acquired only after a properly canalized effort guided by educational experts over a minimum period of four years, and which must be kept alive by thinking. Of the college graduate who has acquired the philosophic habit of mind, it cannot be said that he never thought again after he had begun to work in the business world.

It is surely of pertinence here to note that Adolf Berle in his recently

published *The Twentieth Century Capitalist Revolution* insists that businessmen become philosophers. Only then can the businessman see the mammoth corporation as it really is, "a social institution in the context of a revolutionary century." Presumably the emergence of a businessman-philosopher might well be looked upon as the most revolutionary development of our revolutionary century. Perhaps before Mr. Berle wrote his book, he was reading Shaw's *Man and Superman.* In that part of the play produced two years ago on Broadway as "Don Juan in Hell," Don Juan, in hell, remarks, "Only one sort of man has ever been happy, has ever been universally respected among all the conflicts of interests and delusions." "You mean," says an old soldier nearby who has faded away into hell, "the military man?" "No," replies Juan, "I do not mean the military man. When the military approaches, the world picks up its spoons and packs off its womankind. No: I sing not arms and the hero, but the philosophic man; he who seeks in contemplation to discover the inner will of the world; in invention to discover the means of fulfilling that will; and in action to do that will by the so-discovered means. Of all other sorts of men I declare myself tired. They are tedious failures."

Like Shaw, the CEA has been singing of the philosophic man to the business community as the only kind fit for executive position in our complex time. The institutes have proclaimed the need for a transformation of the executive from the practical, efficient man who can get things done, to the philosophic man, the man of ideas, unallergic to ideas, and at home in the world of ideas; from the man of shallow strenuosity too given to slogans about "the business system" and to the Cal Coolidge dictum about the business of America being business, to a man aware of non-material considerations, of the repercussions that may follow at home and abroad from what he says and does; from a man of black-and-white mentality to one able to distinguish the neutral grays.

Further, the CEA has proclaimed that the only way to produce such a man, the philosophic man, is through a liberal education. But not any kind of liberal education. We in the academic world have been careful in our liaison with the business world not to give the impression that we think that hitherto we have been eminently successful in giving to an impoverished world such philosophic men as Shaw describes. We have freely admitted our failure. "I only took the regular course," said the Mock Turtle in Alice's Wonderland. "Reeling and writhing, of course, to begin with—and then the different branches of arithmetic—Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision."

But with admission of failure has come the promise of improvement—and great improvement. Selling liberal education, the liberal arts, to the business community has made us in the academic community increasingly alert to our educational responsibilities and the kind of quality product we want to emerge from our colleges. For all too long the liberal arts curriculum remained an intellectual wasteland, with the students stum-

bling and fumbling through the labyrinthine ways of innumerable, unintegrated courses, ignorant of what it all added up to, and emerging eventually with A.B. diplomas, certainly not bewitched, but considerably bothered and bewildered. Goaded, perhaps, by the Robert Maynard Hutchins-Mortimer Adler charges throughout most of the Thirties and pre-war Forties, but recognizing at the same time their validity, many colleges took advantage of the respite, educationally speaking, that the war years gave them to reexamine and reevaluate their liberal arts programs in order to muscularize them, to stimulate greater mental muscle play and intellectual adventure, widening and deepening the students' capacities for self-education. Now we can face the business world in these liaison meetings unabashed by what we have to offer.

The CEA meeting held last June at Michigan State College emphasized another area in which the liberal arts can help, one which Mr. Drucker would appreciate. In a *Yale Review* article of two years ago, which had chiefly to do with David Lilienthal's *Big Business: A New Era*, Mr. Drucker singled out as "the most serious criticism of big business" that "by and large, it had no labor-relations policy whatsoever." Among the participants at the Michigan State gathering of last June were two highly articulate members of the labor community, Brendan Sexton, Director of Education, UAW-CIO, and Mark Starr, Education Director of the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union. While both agreed that the liberal arts should prepare an élite for executive positions in management, they pointed out that liberal arts could also prepare an élite of union leaders. If around the collective bargaining tables were philosophic men representing labor and other philosophic men representing management, would not the possibilities of agreeing on a stable labor-relations policy be immeasurably increased?

The efforts of the College English Association to bring the business world to a deeper understanding of the importance of the liberal arts have been given incalculable impetus by help from not altogether unexpected sources. *The Saturday Review* issued a special supplement on the CEA institute held in October, 1953, at the Corning Glass Center, Corning, N. Y. In April, 1953, two months before the Association's second institute on the theme of business and the liberal arts, *Fortune* featured an article, "Should a Businessman Be Educated?" Not surprisingly, the answer was yes. But the kind of education asked for, the kind that would give men coming into management what Gulf Oil's president, Sidney Swensrud, referred to in the article as an "understanding of the whole sweep of modern, economic, political and social life," can certainly only be given by the liberal arts. Last May, a Fortune article asked an equally pertinent question, "Why Don't Businessmen Read Books?" They don't read books, meaning abstract books of philosophy, or biographies, or great drama, great fiction, great poetry, because they don't think it necessary to their success. Clarence Randall is quoted as saying that the businessman has enough time, but spends his

leisure in activities like "canasta, bridge, or meeting the boys." Again the inescapable conclusion: only a liberal arts education prepares readers worthy of the name. Then in the next issue, June '54, *Fortune* discussed undergraduate schools of business, "Business Schools: Pass or Flunk?" The answer: "Flunk." Business schools are not preparing an élite; quite the contrary. Once again the conclusion inevitable as well as inescapable: American business must decide "that a liberal education is to be accorded a high degree of favor and is in fact the best professional preparation."

Mr. Wallace Stevens, in a paper read before the 45th Anniversary Convention of the American Federation of Arts in New York City, and reprinted in *The Yale Review* (Winter issue, '55), wonders about the effect the presence of "an imaginative thinker," a philosophic man *par excellence* like Professor Alfred North Whitehead, would have "on the board of directors of a corporation of national scope, or for that matter, as a member of the executive committee of one of the larger labor unions." Mr. Stevens cites Professor Whitehead as an example of an "all-round man," a whole man, which doesn't "necessarily include a man of any technical business experience." He thinks, of course, that the effect of Whitehead would be dazzling. The CEA hasn't exactly been wondering about contributing neo-Whiteheads to the business world, but it has been concerned, and continues to be, about contributing genuine eggheads. So far, perhaps, in its four institutes on the theme of industry and the liberal arts, its activities have illustrated Adlai Stevenson's observation, "Via ovicipitum dura est," (The way of the egghead is hard). But westward, lo, or rather northeastwards in Union College, April 5-7, the land is bright.

Mystery Program

● **August Kadow**

Invented violence squirms through the air,
screams murder, sobs, remakes forgotten crime,
remarks the fence and boundary of fear,
insists upon our innocence of name.

We listen through the twilight to the hand,
the eye, the foot tracking the murder gun—
the criminal, the guilt, the sniffing hound,
and in our sudden fear, a fear is gone.

For we have known it on the hall and stair,
the tread that follows, sound unheard but felt,
have fled from it, have ducked behind the door,
but now we know: It was another's guilt.

Two Lenten Poems

Sestina for Good Friday

● **Brother D. Adelbert, F.S.C.**

"Why does the black wind bury day in darkness,
Whirling the sky in rolling whorls of thunder-
Driven vapor, like foaming Jordan broken
On sheer stone shores? Why are the storm clouds riven
With flame hurled high, gashes of torn fire flashing,
With thundered doom under sky's dome resounding?"

O Caiphas, hear Judgment's knell resounding
Through these holy Temple courts and see darkness
Of your dark doom drown earth and sky; see flashing
Flame profane this Holy Place, where dread thunder
Stones guiltless air; the Holy Veil see riven
Through warp and weft; see the Gold Portal broken.

O Judas, see thy Sion's Shepherd broken;
O Levites, hear the smitten Rock, resounding,
Hurl Doom's shadow on the Jews. See tombs riven.
Beat thy heart, O pagan Pilate, in darkness
Of withered fear, when through the dinning thunder
Knell are heard wild wails, are seen boned hands flashing—

"Who are these two twisted shapes in the flashing
Lightning, locked in weird wrestling on these broken
Rocks? Is one the Pale Rider?" The grim thunder
Rumbles, "Death!" The Wolf howls echo, resounding,
"Death!" "For the shrouded White Rider," wan darkness
Whispers, "Dig the Grave where the tombs are riven."

"There, there the Raven rides the thunder-riven
Wind, and the fell-grey Wolf slips with flashing
Fire-lit eyes among the shadows of darkness,
Hungry for me. Christ, remember my broken
Soul in your kingdom." The darkness, resounding,
Whispers back, "Your kingdom!" "Death!" growls the thunder.

Hearing now the dying murmur of thunder
Unrolling down the dome of the storm-riven
Sky, the shrinking Wolf howls in the resounding

Wind and turns to the Hill with white teeth flashing
White fire and red-fired eyes fixing the broken
Lamb of Sion bleeding against the darkness.

The Wolf, to Darkness doomed, hears through the riven
Sky Thy Word's joy-words thunder with foam-flashing
White crests broken and Eden's song resounding.

Et Continuo Gallus Cantavit

• **Riley Hughes**

Hurrying forth he cursed.

Hummocks torn from earth,
Flung by his hand,
Broke treaties.
The thorn denied the rose.
Seven stars flew backward.
The leopard changed his spots
To purple squares, the antelope
Grew slothful. And the
Burdened water horse
Shot by on land. Number
Disengaged itself:
Until the cock remembered
And hurled three swords.

Then he recalling wept,
As the liquid eye of hare
And locust's withered arm
Bore frightened witness to
Minority.

Europe from the Reformation to the Revolution

● Christopher Dawson

II. RATIONALISM AND REVOLUTION*

WHEN one considers the progress of the Catholic revival in the 16th and 17th centuries and the apparent strength of religious faith and practice both in Catholic and Protestant Europe at that time, it is difficult to understand how European culture ever became secularized. In the middle of the 17th century Europe and America also were divided between opposing forms of religion and culture, but both of them—the Baroque culture of the South and the Protestant culture of the North—were intensely religious and sincerely Christian. Yet in a century or a century and a half all this was changed and Europe had become the Europe that we know. Religion had become a matter of private opinion and the public life of the state and the intellectual community of culture had become almost completely secularized.

This change was even more revolutionary than that of the 16th century, although it was less spectacular. For it was not the result of the French Revolution. The spiritual revolution had been already accomplished before there was any question of a political one.

How then are we to explain so vast a change? It was not, as is sometimes supposed, the direct consequence of the Reformation, nor was it due to the political or cultural victory of the Protestant North over the Catholic South. Yet on the other hand it had no roots within the Baroque culture itself, for the latter had attained a state of social and political equilibrium which might have endured for centuries, if it had not been disturbed from without. Spain and Italy were as impervious to Protestantism as Scotland and Scandinavia were impervious to Catholicism. And so too in America there was no possibility of mutual influence or understanding between the Protestants of New England and the Catholics of New France or New Spain.

But to this rule there was one great exception. Throughout the decisive period in which the new Catholic and Protestant cultures were becoming stabilized, the largest national state in Western Europe remained divided between the two religions. The French religious wars of the 16th century had ended in a kind of stalemate by which the leader of the Protestants became the representative of French national unity by himself becoming a Catholic, while at the same time guaranteeing the rights and

Third of the four installments in which FOUR QUARTERS presents the author's recent Oriel Lectures delivered at Oxford University.

privileges of the Protestant minority. The Edict of Nantes not only secured freedom of conscience for the Protestants; it recognized their corporate existence as an organized society—a state within a state—with their own religious and political assemblies, their own fortresses and practically their own army.

Nevertheless these very generous terms did not represent a Protestant triumph, but rather a victory for the party of conciliation, the so-called Politiques, who were prepared to sacrifice the principle of religious unity to the cause of national unity and who found their leader and representative in Henry IV himself who repeatedly changed his religion according to political circumstances; once insincerely in order to save his life after the massacre of St. Bartholomew and once with apparent sincerity at the moment when his conversion gave him the crown and defeated the European hegemony of Spanish Catholicism.

For Henry IV the re-establishment of national unity after forty years of civil war was the first essential. If his subjects were good Frenchmen they could be Catholic or Protestant, but they must be Frenchmen first. And this point of view made a strong appeal to a generation which had been ruined by the miseries of civil war, deafened by religious controversy and touched in their national pride by foreign intervention. They welcomed the restoration of the royal power as an impartial arbiter which would be strong enough to impose peace on the rival churches and parties which were tearing France in pieces. It is true that the age of Henry IV and Richelieu witnessed a great movement of Catholic revival which produced a galaxy of saints and mystics, like the Spanish revival in the previous century. But unlike the latter it was not a universal movement which embraced and inspired the whole culture, but a minority movement, which like the Puritan movement in England was a protest against the secularizing tendencies of the national culture. This analogy with Puritanism is especially visible on the left wing of the French Catholic revival which is represented by the Jansenist movement and which contributed no less than Protestantism itself to the loss of religious unity and to the growth of a sectarian spirit.

Meanwhile the work of Henry IV was being carried on by Cardinal Richelieu, the classical representative of the *raison d'etat*, who did more than Gustavus Adolphus or Cromwell to defeat the international policy of the Counter Reformation and to destroy the political unity of Catholic Europe. And this ruthless system of international power-politics which established the greatness of France on the ruin of Central Europe went hand in hand with an equally ruthless system of internal centralization which prepared the way for the absolute national monarchy of Louis XIV.

The effects of this revolution were not only political; they were also religious and cultural. The Gallican Church became more and more an autonomous ecclesiastical organism and French culture became progressively detached from the Baroque culture of Catholic Europe. This new national

culture still shared the ideals of the humanist culture, but instead of applying them, as the Baroque society had done, to the service of an international religion, it used culture, in the Augustan manner, as an instrument of government and empire. This ideal found its most complete expression in the palace of Versailles and the elaborate ritual of the Court of Louis XIV. All the resources of the nation were concentrated on the worship of the *Roi Soleil* whose splendour in turn was reflected by every facet of French culture. As Racine himself said in one of his discourses to the Academy, "All the words of the language and even the syllables, seem precious to us because we regard them as so many instruments with which to serve the glory of our august protector."

Accordingly literature and art were subjected to a strict social regime, administered by the various royal academies: The Academie Francaise, the Academie des Sciences, the Academie des Beaux Arts, and the rest. There was no longer any room for the unbridled fantasy and spiritual ecstasy of the baroque genius. The watch-words of the new culture were order and regularity, good taste and good sense, reason and clear ideas. Its spirit was essentially classical but it was also rationalist, and this rationalist element gradually permeated the whole culture until it undermined and ultimately destroyed the authoritarian orthodoxy of the Gallican Church and the authoritarian absolutism of the French monarchy.

The source of this rationalist tradition was, however, quite distinct from that of the academic classical culture. For at the same time that Richelieu was reorganizing the political and social order according to the principle of the *raison d'etat*, another great man, Descartes, was reorganizing the world of thought according to abstract mathematical principles. He was essentially a revolutionary genius who made a clean sweep of authority and tradition and created a new intellectual world by the unaided powers of individual reason. And yet there was a profound affinity—and even a spiritual identity—between the rationalism of this most independent of thinkers who lived in voluntary exile in Holland and the spirit of the new classical culture. So that in spite of the opposition of all the vested interests in the Church and the Universities, the Cartesian movement won the support not only of the scientific world but of all the leaders of French culture and French religion with the partial exception of Pascal—whether they were Gallicans like Bossuet, Jansenists like Arnauld and Nicole, or mystics like Malebranche.

Nevertheless the transcendental ontological aspect of Descartes' philosophy, which explains its religious appeal, was not the element that was the most influential or the most enduring. As Fontonelle wrote, it was not the metaphysics of Descartes but his new method of reasoning that was the important thing. The ordinary educated man for whom Fontonelle was the spokesman could make nothing of Malebranche's "vision of all things in God" or even of Descartes' proof of the necessity for the Divine existence, but he was very sensible of the value of clear ideas and

of the importance of submitting received opinions and beliefs to strict rational criticism. There is, after all, a democratic and anti-authoritarian principle explicit in the new Cartesian method. Does he not begin his discourse by asserting that "Good sense is of all things in the world the most widely distributed" and that "good sense is by nature equal in all men"? And it was this universal appeal not to the trained intelligence of the philosopher but to the good sense of the ordinary man that was the great characteristic of the 18th century when the French classical culture and the new "philosophic" ideas were alike diffused from one end of Europe to the other through the cosmopolitan society of the courts and the salons.

Nor was this development confined to Catholic Europe, for a parallel movement was taking place in England, which destroyed the religious unity of Protestant culture and prepared the way for its secularization. In England as in France the nation had gone through a period of civil and religious strife which had made men look for some principle of unity that stood outside the field of theological controversy. As the religious wars in France had discredited both the Huguenots and the Catholic League, so the English Civil Wars had discredited the intransigence both of the Puritans and of their Episcopalian opponents. But in England, unlike France, the monarchy itself had been defeated. Strafford, who might have been the English Richelieu, had lost his head. So too had Charles I, and though the act of regicide had shocked the popular conscience, it dealt a blow to the doctrine of Divine Right from which the English monarchy never entirely recovered. Henceforth the English people sought a middle way which it found, after a very unrevolutionary Revolution, in a regime of limited monarchy and limited religious toleration combined with unlimited individualism and freedom of thought.

This English solution was exactly the opposite of that of France and the two nations were involved for twenty-seven years in almost continuous war. Yet in spite of their national and political differences both English and French culture show a similar reaction against mysticism and religious "enthusiasm" and a similar trend towards science and rationalism.

It is true that there is a sharp contrast between the geometrical reason of Descartes and the empirical common sense of Locke, which reflects the difference in spirit of the two cultures. Nevertheless these two schools of thought met and mingled with one another in the culture of the Enlightenment. The philosophy of Voltaire and the Encyclopaedists was that of Locke rather than of Descartes. Yet the driving force behind it is still the Cartesian rationalism with its sublime confidence in the infallibility of reason, its dissolvent criticism of received beliefs and traditions, and its determination "never to accept anything for true which I did not clearly know to be such."

Thus the spiritual barrier which divided the two post-Reformation cultures of Catholic and Protestant Europe was broken down, not by the

victory of one over the other but by the weakening of religious convictions before the self-confident superficial rationalism of the new lay intelligentsia.

Other factors besides philosophical ones contributed to the breaking down of the cultural frontier between the Catholic and Protestant worlds at the close of the 17th century. Above all the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the expulsion or forcible conversion of the French Protestants had the opposite effect to that which Louis XIV intended. For the Protestant exiles who swarmed into Holland and England in their thousands acted at once as the disseminators of French culture and as propagandists for the cause of religious toleration and political liberty. There has never been a body of emigres so intellectually active and so socially influential as the Huguenot exiles. In England they provided the translators, like Abel Boyer, Des Maiseaux, Pierre Coste, Peter Motteux, and the rest, who acted as intermediaries between English and Continental culture. In Holland, which was the chief centre of the emigration, they became the founders of international journalism, and the French reviews and encyclopaedias which poured from the Dutch printing presses had an enormous influence on European opinion. The famous Dictionary which was published by the greatest of these Huguenot publicists, Pierre Bayle in 1695-7, was more widely read than any work of the kind. It became the freethinker's vademecum and prepared the way for the work of Voltaire and the Encyclopaedists.

Moreover it must not be forgotten that the Huguenot exiles still possessed a large body of secret sympathizers inside France among the ex-Protestants and crypto-Protestants who had become nominally Catholic under the stress of persecution. It is of course difficult to determine the exact influence of this factor in the secularization of French culture, since in the nature of the case it was a subterranean and to some extent an unconscious influence, but it was certainly of considerable importance owing to the position that the Protestant middle classes had held in economics and professional life. In any case, it was largely owing to the work of the French Protestant exiles that the new secular culture acquired a cosmopolitan character. This culture was still French in spirit and ideals, but it was no longer identified as in the 17th century with the power of the French monarchy and the political expansion of French power.

Nevertheless it was still limited to the three northwestern countries— France, Holland and England—with a somewhat uneven extension into north and west Germany. The Baroque culture of southern and central Europe still remained a closed world, and owing to the authoritarian character of the governments and the control of the Church over education and literature, the new culture and the new ideas had little opportunity of infiltration.

But it so happened that at this moment at the turn of the century— a great change took place on the political level which entirely altered the balance of European culture.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

To the Pyramid

● Stephen Morris

ALL construction is based on blood. Everybody knows that. There is no need for the workers to be excited.

However, it is easy to see why they show some alarm. I grant them their alarm. Every engineer before me on this massive project has had to contend with the fear of the pyramid workers. But there have been compensations: the Pharaoh is pleased with them. They are told that increasingly.

There is no reason why they should be told. The matter is out of their hands. But I am a reasonable man. No one knows this better than they do. And the old workers, those who have been working on the great project for fifteen years, occasionally speak of me to their overseers. They say I am the most merciful and benevolent engineer they have ever worked under. The overseers report this to me. Naturally.

But one worker actually stopped *me* today. It was a breach of rules for a common worker to talk to me—especially during work hours. But I like to think I can relax the rules—that I, a common worker myself once, a man who has risen from the ranks—can relax the law for a while and listen to them.

This worker, Kaman was his name, interrupted me while I was bending over a map in the tent. I was concentrating on a most difficult problem, one involving mathematics. The heat from the desert was murderous. I was just reaching for a jug of water when this Kaman burst in, bumping the jug from my hand. The water spilled out on the sand.

I was furious. In the first place he had interrupted me, the engineer, while I was concentrating on most difficult work, imperial work for his majesty the Pharaoh. What did he mean, interrupting me? The air turned red all around me. I clenched my fist and swung. He dropped like a dropped plumb-bob.

I was immediately sorry. But since discipline is so important, especially with the workers, I said nothing. He dragged himself to his feet and slowly moved his jaw. He had straggly matted hair, the usual filthy loin cloth and his ribs looked like the spokes of a wheel.

"Praise Pharaoh," he said.

"Praise Pharaoh," I said. I looked at him sternly.

"Excuse a poor laborer." He stopped and eyed me closely. I nodded and examined my hand. He began to speak hurriedly, as if he feared I was intending to hit him again.

"Hurry up," I said curtly. "Hurry up. My time is not my own."

"Beg pardon, sir engineer. But I—we—I—wanted to thank your graciousness."

"What's that?"

"Some of the workers sent me to you with their blessing."

"Blessing? What blessing?"

"They thank you for your kindness."

"What are you talking about?" I said. "Get to the point. Hurry it up."

"There has been a rumor going around—among the rope men."

I sighed to myself. There was no getting around it. I had started listening to him and now I would have to finish listening to him. The more fool I. I should have turned him away like a dog. Then I could have continued working over the map, planning, as I was always planning, miles, schedules, work loads, what the workers were capable of last week, today, next week, next month, supplies, food, clothes for the overseers and entertainment for the supervisors. This would have to wait, now. We Egyptians are the most garrulous lot in the world. The Assyrians would never stand for such stuff among their workers. They have the right idea. Organization. Iron discipline. That's what counts. But we Egyptians—start us talking and we don't stop. Pull out our tongues and we can rule the world. That's the way it was in the Old Kingdom.

Here we were two years behind schedule. Two years to make up somehow. Two years, in which the stone for the pyramid had fallen further and further behind in the Vizier's schedule. I would make it up. That's what he told me, in assigning me the job. But had I? No. I, the best engineer in the service of the Pharaoh. Still two years behind.

The thought made me simmer with impatience.

"Hurry up," I shouted to Kaman for the third time. "What are you trying to say?"

"The water, I made you spill it. I'm sorry."

This remark, a stupid one, should have made me more angry than before. It didn't. There is something in the air here, in this section of the desert, which tends to rob one even of the energy to hate.

It may have been this dancing girl of the air which drained my emotion dry. This sirocco. Anyway, I remember, my eyes misted over. I felt sorry for this tactless wretch who had made his exquisitely stupid remark. I felt that I was getting stupid too, cloddish, on the same brute level as the workers, pulling at their ropes all day in a numbed fog.

I looked past him. I looked over his shoulder, bowed with fifteen years of pulling the rope, and saw the desert and the men in it. A week before, a day before, it would have been a sight to gladden my heart. There they were: the battalion of pyramid workers. They were about three miles away, pulling the stone. It is difficult to describe the magnificence of the sight. My heart should have pounded. It didn't.

The stone was twenty-two feet square. It was the biggest fact, the grandest achievement, on the horizon. I was directing its course, to destination. Once there, it would be added to the thousands of other stones coming from every quarry in Egypt and would become a part of the Pharaoh's tomb. My name would be inscribed on its side: Gruxin, Chief Engineer. I would be famous.

No one who has not seen the stone can appreciate the difficulties in moving it. The best brains in the Kingdom have worked on details of its transportation.

Since it was gouged from Elephantine it has made rapid progress as stones go. It has gone ten miles a year. To the foreigner, to an Assyrian, say, this may seem absurd. But we of the pyramid forces are proud of this record. It is true that in some years the stone has not moved ten miles. This is due to many factors: poor supervision and poor handling of the workers, bad weather, Nile overflow or drought, when the water supply is exhausted and the workers die like flies and even the supervisors are uncomfortable. All these factors are calculated by the Vizier.

The Vizier may become convinced that the Engineer is lax. Look at Shepsekef. Three miles in a year! How could he imagine that such a snail's pace could get by the Vizier? Nothing escapes the Vizier. Shepsekef was removed. His workers wept when his removal was announced. Some committed suicide. But that could not be helped.

I have not driven them too hard. I have not driven them too hard. Why do I worry about it anyway? What if I had? Who can say that he has been driven too hard, beaten beyond endurance, who remains to tell of it? And what would they have at court anyway? They are not children there, they impose a schedule, they know what flesh and blood can do, no one can do more than flesh and blood can do, we are not gods, we are men, we can do so much, no more, we have a schedule, yes, we have to make our ten miles a year or poof! somebody goes and nobody knows where and he is not heard from again.

The workers respect me, I know they do, they say so, they go out of their way to say so, they tell the overseers, why would they say that if they did not think so? They know I demand results, that I stand for no loafing, but they can be certain under my rule that they will get their bread and water every day, I am not out to make a fortune over their empty bellies, like everybody else, I know what a man can do, he works best on a full stomach, I know what it is like to pull a rope.

But what does the Vizier think he is doing, raising the schedule, demanding another five miles a year? How does he think this can be accomplished? I am not superhuman. I have done well. Agreed. But I get my results through kindness. Not through the usual severities. That is why they idolize me, the workers. How can I get this extra five miles . . . through . . . what?

The whispers against me at Thebes are untrue. I do not baby the workers. They have to hop, skip and jump. They know that. When one of the wings starts slowing up I order the lash. No feelings are involved. No spite. No needless sacrifice of lives. That's me, Gruxin the kind. When the lash flies and red drops appear on the sand, however, I turn around and look the other way and try to find something nice to see and try to hear something pleasant, imagine that Lililo is near,

playing the lute to me again, within a walled garden and a fountain is making a quiet sound.

This secret, pleasant little escape, this mirage of the mind, may last me a long time or a short time but it is never long enough. I can be sure when I am jerked back to the present there will be the screaming, the usual screaming, and the buzzards will drop lower and lower.

But I am getting morbid. I tend to get morbid when I examine the figures. Six thousand workers have expired since the stone began to move. A lot of workers.

Suddenly I found myself staring stupidly at the wings straining at the ropes. Kaman was staring at me just as stupidly. The main sound came from the monotonous timed chant of the head overseer. He was standing in his cart, clapping his hands in time and the workers wrenched at the ropes in reply. One overseer shouted hoarsely at his crew.

From where I was standing I could see four wings. The fifth was hidden from me by the tent flap. The two lead wings were well in advance of the stone, each with the long knotted ropes, fanned out slightly abeam of the stone, the men looking like separate small wheat blades bending under a grass wind. We had a force of four thousand on that stone. Eight hundred men to a rope. The other three wings were disposed as usual, one directly in front and the other two side wings at angles of thirty degrees from the lateral axis.

The rope basket, tightly encircling the stone and to which the wing ropes were attached, was beginning to look worn. It might have to be repaired soon. Another worry.

"You have been kind to us," Kaman said.

I was watching a buzzard. It dropped lower with a cool, majestic deliberation. It was fat and lazy. Brazen. These birds were brazen. In the time I have been on this project I have never known a buzzard to display fear of a living man. They look you in the eye with a certain insolence. They do not show fear of you at all. They fly away if you throw a stone at them. They never go far away. And they are so fat.

This one was sifting down in his lazy way. There was a worker, no, there were three of them who had not gotten up from the last lash. The buzzard circled gently to one man who was still screaming. His arm was extended, standing up sharply against the sand like a sign of hope. The buzzard landed near him. The work ground on.

Kaman coughed apologetically.

"Why aren't you working?" I said sternly.

"Kelp, my overseer, gave me permission to see you."

"Oh. I'm sorry I hit you."

"It's nothing," he muttered. He said something I didn't hear. "I wanted to thank you, though."

"What for?"

Kaman wiped the sweat running down his face. He had a broken nose. He would have been a good looking man but for his broken nose, which gave him a predatory look. His eyes saved his face. They were

good-humored, gentle, kind. Just like mine.

Kaman looked down at the sand. He spat out blood. The desert disease.

"The workers were afraid you were going to raise the daily sacrifice. They heard this a week ago. But since nothing has happened, they feel that their fears were foolish. Some idle talk. A typical ropeman's rumor. You know how it is. In the desert. On the rope. Buzzards following every day. A man gets funny ideas. We hoped you wouldn't."

I looked at his hands.

"Of course not," I said. Then I hedged a little. "As long as we make good progress. No loafing and no increase. The same as before." Then I became angry. Was the sun getting me? The sight of Kaman's cap stuck in his loin cloth cooled my anger. He had so little. I could snuff him out with a wave of the hand.

"This talk is against the rules," I said.

"Yes sir. Yes sir." He bowed twice. He backed away.

"Praise Pharaoh," I said.

"Praise Pharaoh," he said. He walked away. Once he stumbled. He recovered, spat blood on the sand and walked back to the Kelp wing.

So they were worrying. Well, what of it? What if the rumor had been more than a ropeman's rumor? What could they do about it? I clenched my hand. I looked at it, the veins standing out in the firm skin, the leather amulet on the arm, a love token from Lililo. Such strength.

But the sacrifice. From time before papyrus it had been the law: five workers a day go under the stone. The five worst ropemen go under. Why change it? Because of the new schedule.

An engineer is only human. He cannot accomplish the impossible. He is dealing with a force—the stone. The stone is inexorable, it is fate, it is the law of life, it knows nothing, feels nothing, cares nothing, it is going to destination, to the pyramid, that is what is important, everything else is unessential, the wing leaders are unessential, I, Gruxin the kind, am unessential, only the stone is the fact, is the radiance of the Pharaoh's will. It moves on.

It moves on, daily, getting nearer to destination. Little by little. And the five men, tied together on the desert, in front of the slowly tumbling stone, can scream all they want, the buzzards can drop lower, who cares? Nobody, because the stone is nearer to destination. It is the only way to do it.

But the workers are deluded. The new schedule is murderous. It may be necessary to increase the number to seven. *They* recommended ten at first, all the overseers were for it and the officers, because they say that the workers are getting desperate again.

But I am Gruxin the kind. I want to go down in history with that name. I said to the officers, "No. You are too harsh. What would you have? Seven is plenty. And not even seven if we can get the work out of them for five."

So there it stands. Five a day until they slow down. The rumor

has had an effect. They are killing themselves in their eagerness to pull the stone. They feel it is more than ever an intensely personal matter. Let it rest that way. I am human. I know their problems.

I used to be on the rope myself.

● **Two Poems by Lori Petri**

The Eternal City

Roads leading Romeward for unending miles,
Marmoreal statuaries of breathless view,
Columns and porticoes in stately piles,
Defied demolishment beneath the blue.
What now endures? Magnificence enough
To warrant an assumption of the name,
And ruin to show time's ultimate rebuff
When eternity is linked with mortal fame.

But somewhere on a champaign of the soul
Must rise the architectural design,
With fluted pillars undefaced and whole,
Of monuments whose every arch and line
Will rumor, till they crumble into sand,
The blue print of an ultramundane hand.

This is a Night

Outside, the lunar vessel spills
A glamourie on meads and hills,
The wind, in heaven's eerie room,
Is riding forth upon a broom
And wildlings lurk behind each tree,
Betrayed by shadows that dance and flee.
This is a night for man to shed
The common roof, the snug warm bed,
And making a bow of prudent bars,
Filling a quiver with shooting stars,
Forget he was of woman born,
And hunt the milk-white unicorn.

Contributors

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